

# Hill House School

Rope Hill, Boldre, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 8NE

## Inspection dates

23-25 September 2013

## Reason for inspection

This emergency inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools to look into concerns raised about some aspects of the school's procedures and practices on matters of welfare, health and safety. It was undertaken at the same time as a monitoring visit of the residential provision which is registered as a children's home by Ofsted.

## Conclusions

The school has had a significant number of staff changes since the last inspection in July 2012. A new headteacher has been appointed and the leadership team has been re-organised. Roles and responsibilities have been clarified at all levels.

The school does not meet all the requirements for independent schools. A number of practices and procedures related to welfare, health and safety, and the appointment of staff are inadequate. The new headteacher is aware of what needs to be done and is successfully 'raising the bar' of expectations on staff to perform well for the benefit and safety of all the young people. Although there have been recent positive changes, the full impact of these has yet to be seen.

Continuity of staffing has been a problem for the school. There has been a very high turnover of staff since the last inspection. Although staff speak highly of their induction training, they are not always gaining systematically the skills and knowledge to deal with procedures and to adequately manage critical events. The current training programme is not meeting the needs of staff to allow them to do their jobs to the highest level. The proprietors are already taking steps to implement new procedures for appointing and training staff which have the potential to improve future staff retention and capabilities.

Staff have received training in safeguarding, though not all are clear enough about who is the named designated person for child protection and exactly what actions they should take if a senior member of staff is implicated in the event of a disclosure about child abuse. Although record keeping on safeguarding matters has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school is not diligent enough in notifying Ofsted where necessary. The school keeps a single staff register to show that appropriate checks have been carried out before staff start work at the school. There are some administrative errors on the register and the school has not ensured, while waiting for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, that interim checks are made against the list of people who are barred from working with children.

Procedures for securing medicines and rigorously recording the administration of medicines, including where errors occur, are inadequate. There is an appropriate number of staff that are trained to administer first aid. However, first aid kits and their content

have not been diligently checked, nor is their position clearly labelled. Health care plans are not yet in place for all young people, though a health profile is completed when they are admitted to the school. The new school nurse has already identified these weaknesses and has a clear plan to take immediate steps to improve the situation. Good steps have been taken to improve the food that young people eat and this is having a positive impact on their health.

Senior leaders and proprietors have recognised that the use of high-risk physical interventions has reached unacceptable proportions and puts young people at risk. Although the use of strategies such as supine restraints can prevent self-injurious behaviour and keep young people safe, the frequency of using this strategy is not reducing quickly enough. The proprietors have responded by providing training for staff in alternate behaviour management strategies that do not rely on supine restraints. The monitoring of young people's well-being during high-risk intervention strategies is not well recorded.

Procedures to evacuate the premises in case of fire are not rigorous enough. Although the school has conducted fire drills, these are not regular enough, given the complexity of the site, with several secure areas on different levels and the recent high number of staff changes. Some staff report that they are confused about where they should assemble if there is a fire. Young people have personal emergency evacuation plans in place and staff show a good knowledge of what to do. Some matters relating to the accuracy of fire signs were attended to during the inspection. Fire risk assessments and checks on fire fighting appliances are up to date.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

#### **The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements**

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Ensure that all staff, especially new starters, are fully aware of all the procedures relating to safeguarding children and young people.  | paragraph 7 and                |
| Ensure that the behaviour management practices rapidly bring about a reduction in the numbers of incidents of supine restraint.  | paragraph 9                    |
| Ensure that all staff are fully aware of the procedures for evacuation should there be a fire and increase the frequency of fire evacuation drills.  | paragraph 13                   |
| Ensure that all first aid kits have appropriate materials at all times and their location is well signposted.<br>Ensure that the administration of medication is accurate and recorded accurately. | paragraph 14                   |
| Ensure that all staff are checked against the barred list for working with young people and children if the school is not yet in receipt of a DBS check.   | paragraphs 19(2)(a), and 22(3) |

## Inspection team

Daniel Towl, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Information about this school

- Hill House is a residential special school near Lymington, Hampshire.
- It is owned and managed by Cambian Education Services.
- The school opened in 1992 and caters for young people who have autistic spectrum disorder, very complex needs and associated behaviours.
- There are 23 students on roll, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs and are placed by local authorities.
- The school was last inspected in July 2012.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | 116565   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>   | 429906   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>   | 850/6031   |
| This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005. |  |
| <b>Type of school</b>  | Special school for students who have an autistic spectrum disorder |
| <b>School status</b>   | Independent school   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 11–19  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>   | 24   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>  | Cambian Education Services   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Kate Landells  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 4–5 July 2012  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01590 672147   |
| <b>Email address</b>   | kate.landells@cambianguroup.com                                    |

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